

clubs seek regionalisation of reserve section

SPECIAL REPORT BY 'RANGER'

First they want to know if clubs would accept the continuance of the reserve section as constituted at present, and secondly if clubs would support a reserve system based on the Chesham proposal.

Many of the clubs unhesitatingly replied they did not wish to continue under the present set-up, and all these opinions to the first query are fully behind the Chesham proposal.

What is so attractive and alluring about the Chesham revolutionary proposal?

They have simply requested that the present system be scrapped; that all reserve leagues compete on a regionalised basis with the Divisional principle being abolished and substituted by a geographical yardstick.

Basically what this means is that reserve team football receive a massive shot in the arm, for suddenly old and new clubs could revive the old, long-lost and sadly neglected rivalries—and hatreds.

Take for example the position of Marlow at the present moment. Everywhere their Division 2 first team travel, the reserves must follow. But where do they go? Part from Windsor and Eton, there is not one surviving "derby" or "needle" game in their entire programme.

"The Legends of the Lord" — this is the name Marlow Reserves have applied to themselves for many years — could, under the proposals from Chesham United, suddenly become a far more attractive proposition to watch than the first team. And indeed, to carry this to its logical conclusion, the club treasurer might well rub his hands at the prospect of a Marlow Reserves home game and despair over a forthcoming first team match.

For what Chesham United are asking is for the 48 Athenian Clubs to forget the status of their first team and play in four sections each containing 12 sides who are near-neighbours.

This could mean that instead of having teams at the Alfred Davis Memorial Ground from Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex, in whom there is next to no interest at all, the second teams from Hayes, Hounslow, Maidenhead United, Slough Town, Southall, Wembley, Wokingham, Uxbridge, Windsor, Chesham and Harrow.

It will be quickly seen that six of these sides are at present in the Premier Section, two are in Division 1 and the remainder visit Marlow anyway, when the "gates" are usually higher for the visit of these clubs than any other anyway each year.

The whole atmosphere regarding reserve football within

the Division 2 for the past four seasons has been one of frustration and dissonance. The most avid opponents of the present compulsory scheme—and it is a condition of membership that these reserve sides must be run—have usually been the club treasurers.

From personal experience having travelled to over 50 per cent of Athenian League grounds and having deliberately discussed this point with club officials, I am not the least surprised that revolution has at last boiled to the surface.

More power to the elbow of Chesham United for kicking open the door. They will undoubtedly have considerable support from every quarter of the Athenian League territory.

It is to be sincerely hoped that Chesham's move carries the day. What is needed to-day at all levels of administration is common sense. The annual economic disasters inflicted on clubs as a result of having to carry unwanted, unloved and unlooked-at Reserve teams, could be transformed by dropping reserve eleven, entirely.

While this would no doubt make the treasurers happy at the vast savings they could effect as a result on players' expenses, laundry, heating, lighting, water and catering at home as well as travel to away games, there would suddenly be a great many footballers kicking their heels and looking for other clubs.

The Chesham compromise may not be the entire answer, but the whole thing is founded on sound common sense from the clubs', spectators' and players' point of view, and it is certainly deserving of a thorough and fair

GOOD LUCK LADS

Patrick Vercoe's farewell

activities at Lookes Park appear to be on the decline.

The aging of the reserves, which I have already mourned, is another nail in the coffin. Something must be done to check this downward trend and, perhaps, fresh ideas at the top might be the answer.

In a recent letter to the 'Free Press' present chairman Jack Sneathurst commented he would welcome an offer from younger people to help in the administration of the club.

Those of us who care deeply about Wanderers must be prepared to give up valuable time to help try and restore the club to its former glories.

It is no good just one or two individuals coming forward full of enthusiasm. What is required are men who know the game inside out, have the contacts so necessary to acquire the right players, and have the business acumen needed to run the club on professional lines. This surely is a sound basis for recovery.

One question which continually runs through my mind is, How can former players sit back and watch the club slip off its high pedestal which they helped to reach? While not wishing to condemn the present committee, I fully realise they give up valuable spare time and believe sincerely that the decisions they take are for the best. I cannot help thinking that a large slice of the trouble lies on their shoulders.

But, until new faces step forward the present situation will not change. During my day I cannot help being attached to the fortunes of Wycombe Wanderers.

I desperately want to see the club succeed. The support is there and its about time the faithful fans were rewarded.

At 4.30 p.m. on each Saturday afternoon, during the 70s, my thoughts will turn automatically to Wycombe Wanderers and what the outcome of their endeavours on the field have achieved.

I just hope and pray Wanderers will still exist as the 80's looms up.

A THREE-YEARS reign of watching over and reporting on the activities of Wycombe Wanderers F.C. comes to a close at the end of this week when I say my revolve to the 'Free Press'.

During my spell Wanderers were unable to capture any of the major titles at stake—admittedly a number of minor competitions were won—but there were exciting and tense moments.

Two matches stand out in my memory. Both took place in 1968 and involved cup competitions.

THE DATE: January 26, the place: Norwich, the competition: F.A. Amateur Cup, the opposition: City of Norwich School Old Boys Union.

Even now the remembrance of a 1-0 success for the Old Boys—seems impossible to comprehend. Wanderers completely dominated the game forcing well over 30 corners but, watched by a 2,000 crowd packed closely round an open playing field, could not get the ball in the net.

It was an one-sided that it began to get boring to watch as Wycombe pressed relentlessly forward. Worley hit a post, shots were turned regularly off the knee, then almost unbelievably, Norwich broke away and Alan Taylor who has now turned professional with Norwich City, forced the ball past Makkell.

How vividly I remember the train journey back from Norwich. Hardly any of the Wanderers players spoke to each other and even months after the result one player remarked to me "I shall never forget that defeat."

The other occasion touches on a more happy note. The date: April 15, the venue: Chesham, the competition: Berks and Bucks Senior Cup Final, the opposition: Slough Town.

In front of a crowd over the 3,000 mark Wanderers pulled off the coup of the season beating the fancied Slough 3-2 in extra-time.

Drama ran through this clash from the start to the finish. For Wanderers this final was the only glimmer in a poor season. Slough were so confident that the victory banquet had already been ordered.

Goals from Horseman (2) and Samuels' disputed extra-time winner thrilled the large crowd basking in the Bank Holiday sunshine. I described the game as a titanic battle and this was exactly how it was. As I entered the Slough dressing room at the end a number of the players were reduced to tears. No words were needed from their manager Bob Gibbs.

Now as this famous old club, steeped in so much history and tradition, enters the 70s I am worried and concerned over the future. Instead of making progress,

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Steve Freeman wrecks mighty Aveley in Marlow debut

By 'RANGER'
Marlow 3, Aveley 1

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers Reserve player, Steve Freeman made a sensational debut for his new club, Marlow, on Saturday.

His appearance on the field as substitute for the injured Bernie Saunders, nine minutes after the start of the second period prompted, influenced and finally fired Marlow into a furious and fabulous drubbing of mighty Aveley—currently leaders of Athenian League, Division 2, and hot favourites for promotion.

While one of the oldest adages in soccer—"One man never made a team"—adds testimony to its truth every day a ball is kicked, the right guy in the right place, can make a tremendous difference to a team, and on Saturday that aptly summed up the situation so far as Freeman was concerned.

For most of the first 45 minutes it looked like being a repeat of what most Marlow fans have become accustomed to seeing far too often—their team dominating the play but not delivering the goods.

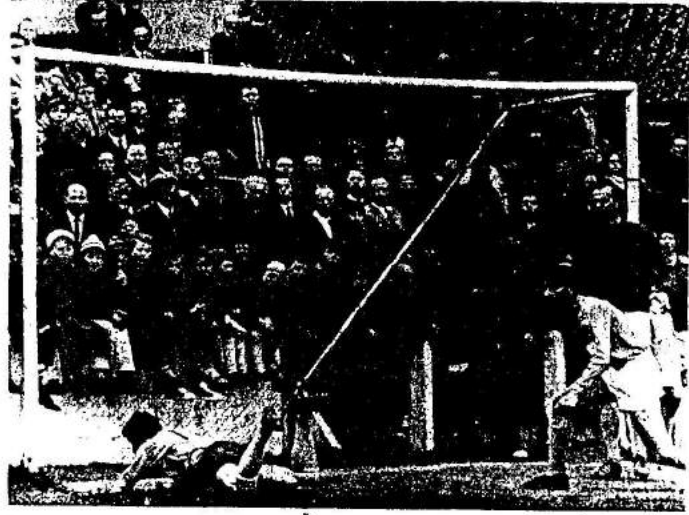
Mick Page—who might well be termed the scourge of Aveley in view of his record against the Essex team—was very unfortunate indeed not to score with a header in the first two minutes.

Page actually netted in the 15th minute but this was ruled out because of alleged offside against him.

Then with 22 minutes gone, Alan Berreth, a fine and powerfully-built inside-right, made a magnificent goal out of virtually nothing at all. He sent in a whizz-bang of a shot from the left-hand edge of the penalty area, across goal and the ball raged home into Dave Wigley's right-hand side of the net. The move started with a throw-in away on the right wing and there appeared at that moment to be no danger whatever!

It seemed obvious that goals would come if the pressure was maintained by the Bucks side, but even with Bernie Saunders doing all he knew until injured in the 34th minute, Marlow still trailed. Then Saunders was cracked in a collision with Tony Wiseman, the Aveley 'keeper.

On stopped Freeman. In the 55th minute Marlow were level. Both Freeman and Radmore so rattled in the Aveley defence that finally Tony Rogers, the league leader in right-back, in making an obvious attempt to scoop the ball over the bar for a corner to get out of trouble, only succeeded in beating Wiseman with a lob that was not strong enough.



The crowd give vent to their feelings as Tony Horseman goes full length for a cross, which he just missed, with the Sutton defence wide open.

Chalfont miss forward power and lose a negative game

Chalfont St. Peter 0, Egham Town 1

CHALFONT ST. PETER's need for effective strikers was clearly underlined by this uninteresting Spartan League match at the Playing Fields on Saturday. Negative football was the order of a listless day.

The number of really determined efforts at goal-scoring could be counted on one hand—one of these coming from Dave Timberlake in the first half with a powerful angled shot which goal-keeper Shrimpton just managed to stop.

Undoubtedly, the home team's best effort came from Derek Breslin in the 89th minute when he ran onto a good cross by Timberlake and his determined header crashed against a post.

The only goal of the match was scored in the 80th minute, resulting from a corner by Egham. The ball was cleared out by the Chalfont defence and Barry Caton hit a low drive from 25 yards, through a sea of legs which left Frank Howard temporarily unsighted. It was unfortunate for Howard who

man out and cleared from Browning's feet.

Ten minutes later came the goal which decided the match and although Chalfont fought back, culminating in Breslin's effort in the last minute, a point could not be recovered.

Chalfont: F. Howard; D. Breslin, D. Ruffles; W. Greenall, R. Woodward, B. Walsh; T. Chapman (sub. T. Weavers), K. Walsh, B. Bennett, R. Shepherd, D. Timberlake.



Tony Horseman is harassed in midfield during Saturday's clash with beaten Amateur Cup finalists Sutton United.